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Ex-Aide to Nixon Denies Asking '72 Grumman Gift

By Don Oberdorfer
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Former Nixon White House aide Richard V. Allen denied yesterday that he had solicited a \$1 million presidential campaign contribution in connection with government assistance in selling military aircraft to Japan.

The allegation is false, Allen declared in testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Multinational Corporations.

The subcommittee had been told Monday by former Grumman International president Thomas P. Cheatham Jr. that Allen asked for the campaign contribution during a corridor discussion in the Executive Office Building in the spring of 1972. Cheatham and Allen testified under oath, the usual practice before the subcommittee.

Two senior Grumman officials, board chairman John C. Bierwirth of the parent Grumman Corp. and vice president John R. Carr, testified yesterday they had no knowledge of a request for a corporate contribution to the 1972 Nixon campaign.

However, CBS producer-reporter Jay McMullen, in an Aug. 27 television program called "The Selling of the F-14," reported that, according to the Grumman corporation, it had been asked to make an illegal corporate contribution to the Nixon campaign—and had refused.

Subcommittee chairman Frank Church (D-Idaho) said McMullen has identified Bierwirth as the source of his information and that the reporter said he checked the information with Carr.

Reached by telephone, McMullen said he did not record his conversation with Bierwirth but may have notes of the interview. He said their talk was not confidential and that a Grumman public relations official was present at the interview, which took place last Spring. McMullen said neither Bierwirth nor Carr would elaborate on the reported request for an illegal corporate contribution.

Under questioning, Bierwirth to-

fied he did not remember making a statement about an approach for an illegal contribution.

Church said the situation presents a direct conflict in the testimony and raises the question of perjury.

There has been no allegation that Grumman or its officials actually made a contribution to the 1972 Nixon campaign.

Bierwirth quoted former Grumman Corp. board chairman E. Clinton Towle as telling Allen during an Aug. 14, 1972, visit to the airplane maker's Long Island headquarters, "I'm saying he could not remember Allen or any request by him for a contribution."

The subcommittee indicated plans to take a deposition from Towle, who is about to be married and is on a honeymoon.

Allen, who was a deputy assistant for the President from July 1971 through July 1972, said he had discussions with former Grumman International president Cheatham in October 1971 and in May, June and July 1972 primarily about the company's overseas sales plans.

Allen reported—and Grumman records confirmed—that Cheatham arranged the August 1972 visit to Grumman headquarters. Allen made short trips to and from the Grumman compound in a company plane, was allowed to sit in the cockpit of an F-14 fighter, and lunched and met with company executives.

Allen said his last effective day of government service had been completed before his trip to Grumman headquarters, which he said was undertaken because he is a pilot and interested in aircraft. The Grumman officials said they did not know that Allen had left the White House post at the time of his visit.

Allen said he had been asked to join Nixon's reelection campaign committee but declined to do so. Allen said he would not have been able to state discussion of a Grumman aircraft sale to Japan on the agenda for talks between Nixon and Japanese Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka.